

# NORTHWEST MISSOURIAN

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# 'Cats rewrite history with third straight NCAA Tourney crown

*"I'm just happy to go out like this."*



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR

Northwest men's basketball guard Trevor Hudgins roars toward the crowd in the aftermath of the Bearcats' 67-58 win over Augusta in the National Championship on March 26 at the Ford Center in Evansville, Indiana.

JON WALKER

Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Northwest men's basketball guard Trevor Hudgins has always dreamed of going out on top.

The 23-year-old from Manhattan, Kansas, has compiled an extensive list of accolades during his five years in Maryville. Entering the Bearcats' matchup with Augusta in the National Championship on March 26, he had won each of the previous two national titles, garnered countless player-of-the-year awards and became the school's all-time leading scorer.

But all of those accolades would've felt a little dimmer, a little more tarnished, if the 'Cats returned to campus with nothing to show for their latest trip to the Hoosier State.

So there he stood — elevated on a table, roaring toward the Northwest faithful in attendance, while blue and white confetti fell upon him in the aftermath of the Bearcats' 67-58 win over the Jaguars at the Ford Center.

"It hasn't really set in yet," Hudgins said after helping win the program's fourth national title. "This game was a battle for 40 minutes. ... Everybody fought today, and we came out on top."

The 9-point triumph clinched Northwest's third straight win in the National Championship, marking the first back-to-back-to-back titles by any program in Division II history. It's a streak that started with the Bearcats' undefeated campaign in 2018-19, continued when they had one of the most dominant Elite Eight performances in 2020-21 and capped off Saturday afternoon.

They would've had the opportunity for it to be four in a row, too, if it weren't for COVID-19 putting a premature end to the 2019-20 season. Northwest was the top-ranked team in the country when everything came to a halt.

"It's absurd. I mean, it really is," said Northwest coach Ben McCollum, who is now 29-5 in NCAA Tournament games. "Until you win one, you don't understand, like, there's so many things that could go wrong. We were good enough and tough enough that we didn't allow anything to go wrong for three straight seasons. ... I would be shocked if it ever happens again."

Everything was bleak for the 'Cats early on, though. The Jaguars (33-4) entered the contest riding the dominance of junior center Tyshaun Crawford, who terrorized opposing teams all season with every bit of his 7-foot-1, 264-pound frame.

He was the aggressor early, grabbing two offensive rebounds on the game's first possession before eventually converting on a layup. That continued throughout the first five minutes, a stretch he used to force Northwest sophomore forward Wes Dreamer into two fouls, and a stretch he used to tally 6 points and four rebounds.

"We knew we weren't gonna stop him completely," Dreamer said. "We just had to take what he was gonna give us. Fortunately, we got enough stops to come out on top."

Dreamer had come alive in the postseason, notching a double-double in three of Northwest's five games leading up to the season finale. He had drawn the assignment of defending the best big man that each team had to offer all season, and the Bearcats (34-5) grew accustomed to him making that person a nonfactor on any given night.

With him on the bench a mere four minutes into the game, somebody else had to step up.

Insert Daniel Abreu.

Abreu, a 6-foot-6 redshirt-freshman forward, was stymied during his first few possessions defending Crawford, who finished with 15 points and 11 rebounds. After all, he was at a disadvantage to the tune of more than half a foot and 50 pounds.

But Hudgins, with the 'Cats trailing 11-5, made his way toward the southernmost baseline of the venue. When he got there, Crawford had a message he had seemingly been waiting to deliver.

"Y'all have won the last two," Crawford told Hudgins. "Now it's time for me to get one."

Hudgins wasn't going to forget that, and he moved it to the forefront of his mind while preparing to inbound the ball with one second left on the shot clock. He wasn't too fond of what the Jaguars' defense presented, so he patiently waited — almost until the expiration of the allotted five seconds — before finding redshirt-freshman guard Mitch Mascari in the corner for a triple.

It wasn't too long after that — two possessions and 54 seconds — when Hudgins scored his first points of the game on a turnaround jumper. The Jaguars made it a priority to slow him down, and up until Crawford's comments, they had.

His initial basket was the beginning of an onslaught, though, one that featured 22 points in the final 14 minutes of the first half en route to a game-high 31. He had the 16th 30-point game of his career during his final time donning the green and white.

Part of Hudgins' scoring spree was one of his patented step-back 3-pointers. It was a triple that gave him his 2,820th career point, moving him by Central Missouri's Bill Fennelly (1977-81) to become the MIAA's all-time leading scorer. In the history of the league, officially no other player has scored more points in their career than No. 12.

That helped the 'Cats carry a 39-28 lead into halftime, an advantage they didn't take too long to expand on.

Within the first seven minutes following the intermission, Northwest climbed out to a game-large 18-point lead (52-34). It seemed like everything was going just the Bearcats' way.

They had, with a combination of Abreu and Dreamer, weathered Crawford's storm. They had found a way to manage on offense while the Jaguars threw everything they had at them.

Then the Bearcats went six minutes without a single point, finding themselves clinging to the very edge of a 57-56 lead with 2 minutes and 38 seconds left.

"I feel like we hit the brakes a little bit on defense," Hudgins said. "They were getting easy opportunities at the offensive end. ... They were just fighting harder than us those few minutes."

That's when Northwest junior guard Diego Bernard, who was battling a left knee injury and had been in foul trouble since the first two minutes of the first half, made a much-needed impact.

Northwest's offense was scrambling, so being the "spark plug" that the 'Cats claim him to be, Bernard made a play that flipped the script on everything the few minutes prior had been. He drove the lane — a regular occurrence for the slasher — before two defenders closed in on him, allowing him to dump the ball off to sophomore forward Luke Waters.

That was a bucket that forced Augusta to foul until the end, and the Bearcats capitalized on nearly every single one of their free-throw opportunities en route to the finish line. When they got there, Hudgins knew the only way he wanted to celebrate.

But right before he climbed up there — right before he stepped into the spotlight one last time — he turned to Bernard and hugged him. The two have been intertwined since Bernard's arrival in 2018, which was Hudgins' first year as the starter, so it seemed only fitting that they shared one final embrace on the court after going 17-0 in NCAA Tournament games during their time together.

"That's my guy," Hudgins said. "That's my brother, for real. I wouldn't trade him for nobody."

"Having those two together for —" McCollum said before choking up. "It's a special deal. It's bittersweet, because those two together, I won't get to coach again."

Shortly after hopping down from that table, Hudgins made his way through the handshake line before eventually joining his teammates for one last celebration with them.

Hudgins didn't care about any of the hardships. He didn't care about the doubt that people cast on the 'Cats throughout the season's entirety. Marveling in that very moment, he just cared about the piece of net tucked into and sticking out of his left sock.

Trevor Hudgins had always dreamed of leaving on top.

"I'm just happy to go out like this."



# Men top Sea Lions to cap off perfect season

**ANDREW WEGLEY**  
Former Managing Editor | @andrewwegley

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (2019) — As confetti rained onto the hardwood at the Ford Center, the Northwest men’s basketball team found itself in the middle of it.

In the middle of the court, a group of 11 players, numerous coaches, assistants and administrators raved to the tune of “Celebration” by Kool and the Gang playing over the arena’s loudspeakers.

In the middle of the commencement, they laughed and danced and hugged one another. Some even cried. They clutched the NCAA Division II National Championship trophy and took turns kissing it.

And in the middle of it all, the Bearcats were anything but that. They moved past Point Loma by a score of 64-58 in the national title game March 30, 2019. The thinning of the pack was complete, and the Bearcats were indeed the center of attention, but they were nowhere near the middle. They were on top.

“I’m speechless,” freshman guard Trevor Hudgins said. “Honestly, our team is just family to me. We love each other. We play for each other. We trust the process. We listen to Mac. We just buy in.”

The win was the 38th in a row for Northwest, completing its flawless season. It came in a familiar fashion. The Bearcats shot well from three, hitting 44.4% of their attempts from beyond the arc, and they played excellent, defensively.

Northwest held Point Loma, a team that averaged 80.1 points per game heading into the title matchup, to just 58 points. The Bearcats allowed the Sea Lions to make only three shots from downtown.

The Bearcats graduated the winningest class in program history last spring, one that included three-time MIAA Player of the Year Justin Pitts. They were expected to take a step back. Instead, they stepped forward.

“Who does that?” McCollum asked in the aftermath of the win. “(We) lost four

starters from a team that probably could have won a national title. ... This is the result of what everybody in the past has done and what our kids have done this season, carrying on that culture.”

McCollum raved about his freshman guards, Hudgins and Diego Bernard, as the two sat next to their coach, wearing their championship hats backward with pieces of the net they’d just cut down tied to the straps.

Bernard scored 14 points in the title game and Hudgins dropped 12, while senior swingman Joey Witthus led the way for Northwest with 24. While fighting through a hip injury that limited his playing time in each of the previous two games, Witthus logged 40 minutes.

“Joey Buckets,” McCollum said. “That’s what he does: gets buckets.”

In the aftermath of his second national-title win, McCollum said the thing he’d remember most about this team is its consistency and passion, among other things. It’s what delivered the Bearcats here.

Their touted culture helped lead them to Evansville, where they cut down nets. The team will soon be fitted for rings for what it accomplished here. The campaign that started with a poorly-played scrimmage and a season-opening overtime victory that the Bearcats nearly lost resulted in a national title.

A year ago, the Bearcats lost their last game of the season, falling in the first round to Minnesota State-Mankato. Back then, the future of the team was unclear. Graduating that senior class was supposed to set Northwest back. It didn’t.

Against all odds, the Bearcats are champions with a young core and a bright future. They were supposed to be a work in progress, a reloading team. This was supposed to be a building year. But they weren’t, and it wasn’t.

Instead, they’re champions. Again.

“I kind of like showing up to family Thanksgiving with a watch and two rings, so we’ll see,” Hawkins said. “I’m running out of fingers.”



# NW fights through COVID for back-to-back titles

**JON WALKER**  
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (2021) — Northwest men’s basketball was never supposed to be here.

The Bearcats watched last season’s title run crumble due to COVID-19 halting the world of sports, and they weren’t sure if they’d be able to play this year either.

After battling through the gauntlet of the MIAA, the Cats were three minutes away from having their season ended courtesy of Northern State in the Central Region Championship. Northwest trailed by 11 points with 3 minutes and 4 seconds left before battling back to win in overtime.

And despite all of the trials and tribulations over the last year, the second-seeded Bearcats took down top-seeded West Texas A&M 80-54 in the National Championship on March 27, 2021, which secured the program’s third national title in four seasons.

“It was probably the most difficult one,” said Northwest coach Ben McCollum, who has been at the helm of the program during all three national titles. “Just in regards to handling success, the emotions of COVID, the emotions of last year — all of those different things — it made it really difficult.”

As trying as the entirety of the season was, every game Northwest played in Evansville, Indiana, seemed to be the complete opposite. The Bearcats outscored their opponents 255-177 during their final three games of the season, which is the largest victory margin for a team throughout the three Elite Eight games (78).

Senior forward Ryan Hawkins was at the forefront of all three of the victories, averaging a double-double throughout the postseason with 25.8 points and 10.4 rebounds per contest. He tallied 31 points and 18 boards in the title game, which capped off his run of individual dominance and led to the senior being named the Elite Eight’s Most Outstanding Player.

“Yeah, he’s a pretty good player,” said McCollum, who recruited Hawkins from Atlantic, Iowa. “He puts a lot of work into

it. ... He got on at the right time, and that helped us quite a bit.”

Hawkins wasn’t alone, though, as sophomore forward Wes Dreamer tallied 19 points and 11 rebounds for the third double-double of his career.

Hawkins and Dreamer personified the dominance Northwest displayed for the entirety of 40 minutes. The Bearcats were 50% from the field, including 46.7% from beyond the arc.

Northwest used its length to hold West Texas A&M to 31.3% from the field, including 5-of-24 from deep (20.8%). The Bearcats planned to be dominant, mostly due to the size advantage they possessed over the Buffs.

They knew it’d be like that when the ball was tipped, despite the game being tied at 13 near the midway point of the first half.

“I felt like through the first possession, we knew we would be able to control the game and take what we wanted,” Hawkins said. “Under 10 minutes left in the game, we knew they were going to try and make a little push there ... kind

of thought it was over then.”

To start his postgame press conference, McCollum — who had just won his 300th game — assured everyone in attendance that the Buffs didn’t have anything to hang their head on. The 12th-year coach was near the lowest of lows before rising to where he is today.

McCollum went 22-31 in his first two seasons at Northwest, which were his first ever years as a head coach. The rest is history.

He doesn’t care about his own personal accolades. He isn’t too concerned that he’s won 300 games in 12 years. The 300th means as much to the coach as the first, which came Nov. 16, 2009, in a 105-55 triumph of Manhattan Christian College.

In the last five seasons, Northwest has captured five MIAA regular season titles, four MIAA Tournament titles, three national championships and a record of 159-8. The Bearcats’ latest run is one that’ll go down as one of the best in Division II history — at least McCollum thinks so.

“I don’t think there’s been many better, if there is any better,” McCollum said.

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PHOTOS BY: ADDALYNN BRADBURY AND JON WALKER



A SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS PROJECT

“LETTERS FROM...”

INTRODUCING THE “LETTERS FROM...” PROJECT

The “Letters from...” project was created in partnership with the Northwest Missourian Editorial Board, Northwest Wellness Services and North Star Advocacy Center, and will be a part of the Opinion section. The series will run from the March 24 issue of the paper throughout the month of April for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. A portion of submitted letters will be published in print, and all eligible letters during the length of the series will be published at [nwmissourinews.com](http://nwmissourinews.com).

The project’s purpose is to give a platform for survivors of sexual assault to share their stories anonymously. The letters are a series of first-hand accounts of consent and sexual violence from Northwest students.

Through this project, survivors are encouraged to be as open and honest with their stories as they wish.

Survivors wishing to share their stories can submit letters to [lettersfrom00@gmail.com](mailto:lettersfrom00@gmail.com). We ask that submissions are free of names, quotes that could link directly to an individual, or calls to action that could harm oneself or others. Letters will be edited for grammar and AP style. If your letter does not meet the criteria initially, feel free to resubmit with edits.

The Editorial Board, Wellness Services and North Star will not share any confidential information with any outside sources.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ACCOUNT FROM VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE, WHICH MAY CONTAIN TRIGGERS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SIMILAR ATROCITIES. THEIR STORIES OF SURVIVAL AND BATTLING STIGMAS REMAIN ANONYMOUS. IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE, PLEASE REACH OUT TO THE RESOURCES LISTED ON THIS PAGE.

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[jcochenour@nodawaycountymo.us](mailto:jcochenour@nodawaycountymo.us)

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES HERE:**  
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FROM: ANONYMOUS

Dear (Name Redacted),

I am writing this letter for you. You know who you are. We both know you won’t see this, so I guess I’m writing this for me and others who have been hurt. You weren’t what I ever thought my attacker would look like. You weren’t a stranger who grabbed me in a dark alley. A drunk guy at a bar who couldn’t take a hint, or “no” as an answer. No, you were someone who I trusted, who I thought I’d marry once I finished school. But things were different then. I was different then. When we met, I was just a little girl.

I was 14 and you were 17. You were kind and funny. You sucked me in with your charm and your openness about your trauma. You let me see your scars right away, so I let you see what few I had. There were good times with you. That’s what makes it so hard to accept what happened. Maybe you don’t see what you did wrong even if you take the time to really reflect on what happened in those five and a half years. But for me, I think about that a lot, more than I want to. But those memories are fading, thankfully, but the emotional scars are still there. They are a part of me now, for better or worse.

It started small, and I thought that it was what I wanted. But that one game that had me sobbing on your bed in your first apartment was my brain’s way of trying to tell me that this wasn’t OK, that I needed to listen to it. But I didn’t. I just wanted so much to make you happy, to make you WANT to stay with me. So, I went along with all of it, even when I was scared and didn’t want to. Maybe that’s why you have no idea what I’m talking about. Because I pretended I was OK with it. But I tried to fight it. I tried to tell you no. That only led to fights and you asking, “Don’t you love me? Don’t you trust me?” You used those words to force me when I was too strong physically to stop you. You used those words to take my strength away.

When I wanted to step away from you because you had become someone I finally knew I couldn’t be with and be safe and know that you wouldn’t listen when I said no, you told me things like, “If you leave me, I’ll kill myself. I’ll have nothing else to live for.” Those were more words that kept me pretending I was OK with what happened. That helped me rationalize what was being done to me as, “Well, we’re in a relationship, so it’s my job to give him whatever he wants in the bedroom.” I see now that this is not the truth. But it was my brain’s way of trying to make sense and bridge the gap between the you who brought me flowers and held my hand with the version of you who pressed his hand against my throat. Your hand that persisted no matter how many times I pulled it away.

I see now the things that I refused to see then. I went and got help. I have come to some sort of peace with what you did to me, but the confliction comes in with those memories, the memories of the good times when you were kind and supportive, not controlling and demanding.

I’ll be honest. There were times where I hated you, hated you for what you had done to me, the scars you had left. How you made it to where when anyone touched me, I shut down. I shut down because, toward the end, that was the only way that I could handle what you were doing with my body. But I have had to come to terms with all of what happened. Now I know it wasn’t my fault. You were the adult. You should have known better. You should have listened when I said I didn’t want to do something or that I was uncomfortable with what you were doing. But I can’t change the past, no one can.

All I can do now is try to forget and, hopefully, forgive you for what you did. For now, I haven’t forgiven. Not that you care, but I feel I can’t forgive you without telling you that what happened was OK and that we can be friends now. We can’t. And it was not OK. I have to find something adjacent to forgiveness, something that lets me not hang on to the trauma and anger that I have toward you. I hope I can get there soon. But I know that I can’t forget.

For everything that you did to me, I now have the chance to bring some sort of good from all that pain and all those scars. I think that the only way I can move on is by writing this letter, not for you to read but for others who have been hurt like me. To reach out and let them know that it’s not their fault, that what happened to them has hurt them and there’s, unfortunately, no way to undo what has been done, but there is a way to move forward and not to be haunted by the ghosts of the past.

For others who have been hurt, I am here for you. I have been down the road of healing, and I am still on it, but I know that you all can move forward stronger than you were before, stronger than you should have to be.

My wish for all of you is that you find some semblance of peace, that you reach out to professionals in the support industry and aren’t afraid to tell your story. You won’t be blamed. You will be believed. You will be held by those who care about you and want you to be all that you were meant to be before this happened. There is nothing that justifies what has happened to you — not your clothing, not how many drinks you had, not who you were with or where you were at. I was wearing jeans and a T-shirt. My attacker was my boyfriend, someone I trusted and genuinely loved. But what he did was not OK.

For those of you who are survivors, please know that we are all behind you, supporting you and wanting you to know without a doubt that you are worthy of true love that listens and respects you and your boundaries. That you are worthy of happiness. That you are worthy of healing.

SUBMIT LETTERS TO: LETTERSFROM00@GMAIL.COM

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# Inmate death investigation continues

**KENDRICK CALFEE**  
Editor-in-Chief | @calfee\_kc

An inmate at the Nodaway County Jail was pronounced dead at Mosaic - Maryville March 19 after suffering an apparent medical emergency. Upon further investigation into his death, there is no foul play suspected.

Nodaway County Sheriff Randy Strong said the inmate, whose name has still not been released, was arrested for allegedly violating a protection order issued against him and another individual.

The inmate's name has not been released by the department, because the county prosecutor did not have a chance to file official charges against him prior to his death. The incident occurred within 24 hours of the inmate's confinement.

"We are still not comfortable releasing the name at this time since there were no charges filed," Strong said. "They said the official autopsy could take three months to get."

Upon his arrest, the inmate was evaluated by medical personnel due to his blood alcohol content to determine if he was fit for confinement, a procedure police often do for suspect safe-

ty. The medical personnel determined the inmate to be fit, and he was booked into the jail in a cell in which no other inmates were occupying.

Body cameras worn by the arresting Maryville police officers showed a lawful arrest with no violence and the suspect cooperating.

Shortly after 2 p.m. March 19, the inmate was seen in a jail camera shaking and collapsing, suffering from what deputies suspected to be a seizure.

"The deputies did a good job of getting to him and starting compressions," Strong said. "One tended to the inmate while the other called EMS."

Though the official autopsy could take three months, the preliminary autopsy report shows the cause of death to be primarily medical.

At the request of Strong and the Nodaway County Sheriff's Department, the investigation is being completed by the Buchanan County Sheriff's Office and the Nodaway County Coroner. The investigation is ongoing.

Strong told the Missourian he will wait to discuss further details, including the inmate's name, until the investigation is completed.



**KENDRICK CALFEE** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
A car passes by the Nodaway County Jail March 29. There is an ongoing investigation into a March 19 death in which an inmate at the jail suffered an apparent medical emergency.

## JUMP

CONTINUED FROM A1

The building needs a new HVAC system, estimated at \$600,000 for replacement, and new LED lights, estimated at more than \$200,000.

The money generated from this sales tax will go to improvements to the Maryville Aquatic Center. The 29-year-old building needs new pumps, valves, repairs to slides and other repairs.

**Other City Council Business:**

The Council approved a contract with Watchguard Inc. for the purchase of three dash camera systems for the Maryville Police Department. Funding for this will come from the Local Crime Prevention Grant Program through the state.

The Council approved a restaurant lease with Brown Bread LLC for William Coy's at Mozingo Lake Recreation Park.

## CRIME LOG

for the week of Sept. 3

**Northwest Missouri State University Police Department**

**March 29**  
There is a closed investigation for a fire alarm in South Complex.

**March 26**  
There is an open investigation for stealing in Forest Village Apartments.

There is a closed investigation for a fire alarm in Hudson Hall.

**March 25**  
There is a closed investigation for tampering with a motor vehicle in Parking Lot 39.

**March 23**  
There is an open investigation for forcible fondling - sexual abuse in the second degree in Hudson Hall.

Eugene Nelson, 36, was arrested on College Park Drive.



**SIDNEY LOWRY** NEWS EDITOR  
Missouri Supreme Court Judge Zel Fischer, presiding Judge Douglas Thomson and Judge Gary Witt sit in the J.W. Jones Union Ballroom while hearing arguments on the four cases throughout Missouri.

## COURT

CONTINUED FROM A12

"Mr. Hudson was experiencing psychotic symptoms at the time - at least he appeared to be from the police reports," Esparza said. "With Mr. Hudson's lack of any prior involvement in the criminal justice system, that one day he just goes out, grabbed a gun, makes wild accusations, and shoots three people."

According to Witcher and police officers on the scene, Hudson's behavior and symptoms were similar to those under the influence of PCP, but Hudson denied any medical test while at the hospital.

Greg Barnes, representing the state, argued that since Hudson called his aunt before the shootings, he had a guilty conscience. He also pointed out he even tried to dispose of the evidence by hiding the shotgun in the sewer.

"Sheer speculation is not enough," Barnes said. "There were allegedly three people who would've known what was in that joint. Two relatives of his were involved, one of which he speculates may have laced it, and he did not call any of those people at trial."

Schumacher v. Stadler was appealed by Schumacher after the Circuit Court of Andrew County ruled that both he and Stadler owned one-half interest on a

house Schumacher purchased for Stadler when they were in a romantic relationship.

Stickler and Stickler v. McGinnis and Wells was appealed to carry out the terms of a settlement after a motor vehicle and motorcycle accident that resulted in the death of Sticklers' father.

Adams v. Treasurer of the State of the Missouri saw lawyers plead their cases in a worker's compensation case of Adams over if he qualified for disability benefits as the result of three separate injuries from 1984, 2001 and 2015.

The cases were all submitted for appeal, and their ruling is pending.

## DEFENDER

CONTINUED FROM A12

The Great Resignation refers to the increase of American workers who decided to leave their jobs since spring of last year. In December, there were a total of 4.3 million people who had quit their jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, leading to employers

struggling to retain workers and keep spots filled.

"I think we filled 43 of those 53, but in the meantime, we have had people who were already working for us resign or retire," Fox said. "So when you combine the two, we brought new people in, but we've had people that we've had with us leave. And so we are still running into trouble with that."

Fox said that with people leaving, they are having to make up for those vacancies while still trying to get ahead by hiring new attorneys.

Another part of the \$3.6 million for public defenders is going toward a pay raise. Fox said Missouri public defenders start out at \$52,000 a year and move up to around \$70,000.

"Four or five years ago, we really had a much smaller budget than we do now. But since we were able to get those ad-

ditional funds, we were able to increase the salaries of a lot of people, and that's led to higher retention," Williams said.

Though this funding helps pay defenders more, working at a private practice can start lawyers anywhere from \$60,000 to \$70,000, according to The Missouri Bar. Nonetheless, Williams thinks the pay raise helps keep defenders.

"It's just not competitive with a lot of other attorney positions. People aren't generally going to come here, you know, kind of for that salary," Williams said. "So when we really bumped those numbers up, I think we have seen an increase in retention."

These vacancies, though, may not be solely tied to pay and turnover.

Despite around 20% of the U.S. population living in rural communities, only 2% of small

law practices are in those areas, according to South Dakota Law Review.

"Part of the issue is, in some of these rural areas, we don't have people that are wanting to practice law or to maybe move up here and live in these smaller areas," Williams said. "So, even though we have these spots approved, we can't necessarily always get them filled."

The lack of desire or motivation to be a public defender in a rural area can cause a legal desert, leading to defenders being spread thin to represent people charged with crimes.

"The bottom line is we need to be able to provide effective assistance to our clients," Williams said. "If we have too many cases, we can't do that."

With the Missouri Justice Fellowship Program, along with the additional funding, Missouri has ended its waitlist but is still looking to fill the vacant attorney positions.

"The attorneys who work for us are the best criminal defense attorneys in Missouri," Fox said. "They're skilled practitioners, they care about their clients, and they do an excellent job. They are typically the attorneys that you will find in the courtroom trying cases and the attorneys that you will find in the appellate courts arguing appeals and making law."

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"The attorneys who work for us are the best criminal defense attorneys in Missouri," Fox said. "They're skilled practitioners, they care about their clients, and they do an excellent job. They are typically the attorneys that you will find in the courtroom trying cases and the attorneys that you will find in the appellate courts arguing appeals and making law."





RENEE HASKELL PHOTOGRAPHER  
SAC Representative Brady Netzel stands to speak at the March 29 Student Senate meeting. The Inclusion Committee announced during the meeting that Black Student Union and Student Activities Council are having a hygiene product drive April 1-15.

# Senate executive ticket runs unopposed

**KENNEDY KALVODA**  
News Reporter | @KKKalvoda1

This year’s Student Senate election will mark the third in a row in which all executive candidates are running unopposed. It will be the fourth consecutive election the vice president and secretary positions have had only one candidate.

As for the executive ticket, there are four senators running: sophomore Liz Motazed, who will be running for President; sophomore Nate Brown, who will be running for vice president; junior Garrison Kennedy, who will be running for secretary; and sophomore Jillian McNamara, who will be running for treasurer. They are all running under the “Motivation” campaign.

Campaigning will be from March 28-April 1, voting will be from April 4-8 and results will be announced April 12. Students will be able to vote on Catpaws.

Despite the buzz spanning from the upcoming election, Student Senate continued its normal business by making three appropriations at its March 29 meeting.

The fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha asked for an appropriation of \$1180 to fund its Alpha Week. This will take place April 4-8 and will include multiple events throughout the week.

Next will be “Phirst Impressions,” which will be from 6-7:30 p.m. April 7 in the Student Union Ballroom. It will be a speed dating event and sexual health awareness seminar.

To finish off the week, Alpha Phi Alpha will host “Phinished Product,” which will be a party from 9-11:30 p.m. April 8 in the Station Center Room. Senate voted unanimously to appropriate the funds.

Bearcat Golf Club requested an appropriation of \$1,500 to pay for expenses throughout the next fall and spring golf season. These expenses include polo shirts and entry fees to the national golf tournament and expenses. Senate voted unanimously to appropriate the full amount.

The African Student Organization requested an appropriation of \$1,125 to pay for its Taste of Africa event April 9, which will include a dinner of traditional African food followed by dancing and music.

The appropriation was originally \$805,

but during the presentation, ASO Treasurer Edidiong Idong-Bassey announced the organization required more than it previously thought due to the cost of the food, which will be imported directly from East Africa. The Senate voted to amend the amount to \$1,125 and also voted unanimously to appropriate the funds.

“Taste of Africa brings some vibes and energy to the campus that some organizations might not bring. We bring different tastes and foods and culture so that people can have a wide variety of experiences here on campus,” Idong-Bassey said.

The Inclusion Committee also announced during the meeting that Black Student Union and Student Activities Council are having a hygiene product drive April 1-15. Donation boxes can be found throughout campus for those who are interested in donating.

The Inclusion Committee also announced the International Student Organization will be having a dinner at 6 p.m. April 1 in the Student Union Ballroom. All proceeds will be donated to Save the Children Inc. to support the children affected by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

# Local healthcare sees effects of nationwide doctor, nurse shortage

**KENNEDY KALVODA**  
News Reporter | @KKKalvoda1

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, shortages in various areas have become increasingly common. A shortage of nurses and doctors in the U.S. has plunged healthcare into a further crisis.

In Missouri, it would take 500 physicians to fill the void the state is currently experiencing, according to Kaiser Health News. Out of the 114 counties in Missouri, Platte County is the only county that is not experiencing a doctor shortage. There are only five other counties that are experiencing a partial shortage, according to the Rural Health Information Hub.

Nate Blackford, president of Mosaic - Maryville, said the hospital is currently experiencing a decline in medical professionals in multiple areas, but mental health and women’s health have been hit harder than the other practices.

The U.S. could see an estimated shortage of 37,800 to 124,000 physicians by 2034, including shortfalls in both primary and specialty care, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.

This shortage has proven to be a difficult problem to fix, especially in Missouri. Throughout Missouri, 9,155 applicants, or about one in five of the candidates, for residency programs did not match with one residency program in 2021 alone, according to the National Resident Matching Program. Residency is the next step doctors must take after completing medical school. This also includes applications from international medical schools — a significant portion.

As part of the Balanced Budget Act in 1997, Congress put a cap on the number of residents the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services would support. The act also placed a

freeze on funding at the level it was at the year prior. However, while the number of students enrolled at medical schools has increased, the cap remains. This has created a bottle neck in the system and stymied the flow of new doctors into areas where the shortage is most present.

“I think the days of us just being able to put an ad out and expect multiple providers to jump on and be interested, those days are over,” Blackford said. “We’ve gotta do a better job of growing our own, of using the technologies that are available to us.”

To combat the shortage, there is a bill going through the Missouri Legislature. This bill would permit assistant physicians to become licensed — similar to doctors who have completed a residency — provided they have practiced for five years with a collaborating physician, passed a licensure exam and completed certain training requirements. This would allow for assistant physicians to fill in the gaps being caused by the shortage.

“Anything that we can do to bring more supply to the area, especially in rural markets where it’s difficult to recruit and retain providers over time. I think getting better access and better supply is welcomed from a health care professional perspective,” Blackford said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOSAIC MEDICAL CENTER - MARYVILLE SUBMITTED  
Dr. Amulya Dakka speaks with a patient at Mosaic - Maryville. Maryville’s only hospital has not been immune to the doctor shortage plaguing the U.S., particularly rural counties.

Some people in the state support the bill, such as Dr. Jeff Davis, chief medical officer for Scotland County Hospital in rural Memphis, Missouri, and an executive committee member of the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons. However, others, such as the Missouri Nurses Association, believe that the 12,000 nurse practitioners throughout the state would be better suited for the job.

On a national level, the American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education also opposed the bill.

Blackford said he believes getting students interested in medical school and the medical field

will help combat the nationwide shortage. He emphasized the importance of practicing medicine in rural areas and called on students who are interested in medicine to practice it in these areas.

“Small town doctors really

have an opportunity to leave a legacy. We’ve seen that repeatedly here in our community. Practicing medicine in a rural environment is extremely rewarding, and it’s something we will continue to need,” Blackford said.

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★ ★ ★ ELECTION 2020

# Parsons runs for City Council reelection



**SIDNEY LOWRY NEWS EDITOR**  
Tye Parsons sits at his desk in Northwest’s Administration Building. After just over three years of being on Council. Parsons is running for a second term for City Council.

**SIDNEY LOWRY**  
News Editor I @sidney\_lowry

In the rearview mirror, Tye Parsons sees years of successful projects the city worked to accomplish. After just over three years on City Council, this is why Parsons’ time in local government doesn’t just come from his tenure on the Council, but rather 25 years of experience inside governments across northwest Missouri. After graduating from Northwest in 1998, he found a job working at the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments, which kickstarted his passion for helping small cities receive funding for large projects.

“I’ve been in and around local government my entire career,” Parsons said. “I like to think that I bring that experience to the Council that I, you know, I speak the language. I know when it comes to accessing state and federal funding and how we can get some of those larger projects done. That’s what I do every day.”

Despite COVID-19 being a huge obstacle, Parsons managed to help start and complete many projects. He said one of his biggest accomplishments on the Council was helping start the construction on South Main Street, a project where the city received a \$10.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

“That is a transformative project for our town,” he said. “I say it all the time, but towns our size don’t get grants that size.”

Parsons was also involved in projects like the opening of the new Keith Wood Public Safety Building, the opening of Thomson Splash ‘N’ Play, increased pay for Maryville police officers, and the installation of a granulated activated carbon adsorber to help with ongoing water plant issues.

He said his number one priority if reelected will be to complete projects

that help with Maryville’s water quality. After three years of hearing people’s concerns about the water, Parsons said his experience in being able to find state and federal money to help fund the improvements for the water plant comes in handy.

“I’m all about leveraging local dollars to get at state and federal money,” Parsons said. “It’s going to be so important when we start talking about the water plant. I mean, these are tremendously expensive assets to a community and tremendously important.”

Parsons focused a lot on using his experience in local government to help find grants and other funding opportunities for costly projects that face the city.

The Council recently approved the purchase of a new fire truck for the Maryville Fire Department, and Parsons was part of finding the partnership with USDA Rural Development to pay for just over half of that truck. Instead of having taxpayer dollars pay for the entirety of the new fire truck, he was able to help find other funding for the equipment.

“We took our tax dollars, and then essentially we doubled it,” Parsons said. “And now instead of having a smaller truck that wouldn’t last as long, we have a state-of-the-art \$1.3 million fire truck that’s going to last for 40 years. And so, it’s that type of experience I think that I bring to the table, just knowing how those things work.”

After three years on City Council, Parsons wants to keep his seat and be at the forefront of important plans of improvement for the city.

“We’ve done a lot of good work over the past three years. We’ve had a lot of momentum and a lot of great opportunities in the future,” he said. “I just want to be a part of that; I want to help. Through my background and experience, I’ve always felt the need to serve, and this is a great way to do it.”

“We’ve had a lot of momentum and a lot of great opportunities in the future. I just want to be a part of that,”

**-TYE PARSONS**  
CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE

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★ ★ ★ ELECTION 2020

# Williams wants to bring blue-collar view

SIDNEY LOWRY  
News Editor | @sidney\_lowry

For the last 10 years, Bryan Williams has worked for the city of Maryville doing everything from volunteering as a firefighter to working in the Public Works Department. Now, after a decade working for the city, he said he wants to continue to contribute to Maryville by bringing a new perspective to City Council – one from a blue-collar worker.

“I didn’t always feel that the average citizen in America is very well-represented on the Council,” Williams said. “We really don’t have a lot of blue-collar people there.”

Williams said the idea wasn’t one that came to him in an instant. It was a small but pervasive one that grew after years of working for Maryville and seeing the city’s impact on citizens.

“I got to see how the city prioritized things and how we did things,” Williams said. “At the bottom level, I got to see things from the bottom looking up, and I really always felt like maybe I could do more for the city, more for the citizens.”

Many of Williams’ Facebook posts for his campaign talk about infrastructure. The candidate said he thinks the city needs to refocus its spending on water, distribution systems, sewer collection and streets.

“Those four things are really the foundation of what our municipality provides the citizens,” Williams said. “Paired with that, you have your public safety, which is your police, fire and dispatch. Those would really be at the top of my list.”

One of the top projects Williams wants to get his hands on if elected would be helping with the new water treatment plant.

He said since he has a background working with the water maintenance

“This community has been great to me the last 14 years, and I just have a passion to serve.”

**-BRYAN WILLIAMS**  
CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE

for the city, he has a unique perspective on the project.

“Understanding what it’s like to be in a hole in the middle of night with tools freezing to your hand — I understand what employers will be going through. I’ll understand that when someone comes to the Council with a need, why it’s important,” Williams said.

“Honestly, I think I’ll be able to see through some of the fluff that kind of comes through the Council as well because of that background,” Williams said.

For the treatment plant, he wants to help with the budget for next year to make sure the plant is a priority before the funding of other projects.

Williams said that though the construction on South Main Street is seen as a pain for some people, he is happy to see the replacement of some of the water system structures, as it was much needed.

Along with building the infrastructure and foundation of Maryville, Williams said, community safety also plays a role.

With his background in firefighting and dispatching, Williams said he knows every officer in the city. Along with that, he said there’s things Maryville can be doing to help its officers succeed.

Williams said improving training for officers will help the overall safety of the community, proposing the idea of making improvements to their firing range and training.

“This campaign isn’t about me,” Williams said. “I’m not going to get any benefit out of being on the Council. I don’t have a business in town or a project I’m trying to push. I genuinely care about the city. This community has been great to me the last 14 years, and I just have a passion to serve. This will be another opportunity for me to serve the community.”



SIDNEY LOWRY NEWS EDITOR  
Bryan Williams sits outside of Scooter’s Coffee March 15. Williams is running for the open City Council seat with hopes to bring a “blue-collar” perspective.

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Voters to see new tax for ADA repairs

SIDNEY LOWRY  
News Editor | @sidney\_lowry

In the municipal election April 5, voters will come across a question about raising sales tax in the city to help support Maryville Parks and Recreation. Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Stubblefield came before City Council to talk about the impacts the sales tax would have on the parks and facilities at the March 28 Council meeting.

The tax that supports Maryville Parks and Recreation – a 1/8% sales tax that brings in around \$260,000 annually – has remained stagnant for the last three years. Stubblefield said there needs to be an increase to help make major repairs to parks, the Community Center and the Aquatic Center.

The 1/8% tax that helped build the Maryville Community center ended in September 2021. The newly proposed tax voters will see on the ballot is for a 1/4% sales tax for the next 20 years.

If the sales tax doesn't pass, Stubblefield said Parks and Recreation will have to consider many alternatives for funding. He outlined the possibility of having to shut down parks that are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, raise user-activity fees, raise Maryville Community Center and Aquatic Center entry fees, reduce the staff and hours of operation, and reduce the maintenance on parks and amenities.

Beyond a slew of repairs, the tax would also help get the 80% of Maryville's parks that are not compliant with the ADA up to regulation.

"With our master plan, the Park Board has set the ADA accessibility as a priority; this includes the bathrooms, sidewalks and parking," Stubblefield said.

Many parks around town, such as Franklin Park and Beal Park, make it very difficult for wheelchair users to make it to the restroom facilities, as there is an absence of sidewalks leading to them. The space inside the restroom makes it difficult for mobility.

80% of parks are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"There isn't a sidewalk on one of them," Stubblefield said. "If you had to get a wheelchair to the bathroom, it's not gonna happen. Once you get there, the door... it's not even 32 inches long. That's an issue with all the restrooms we have in most of the parks."

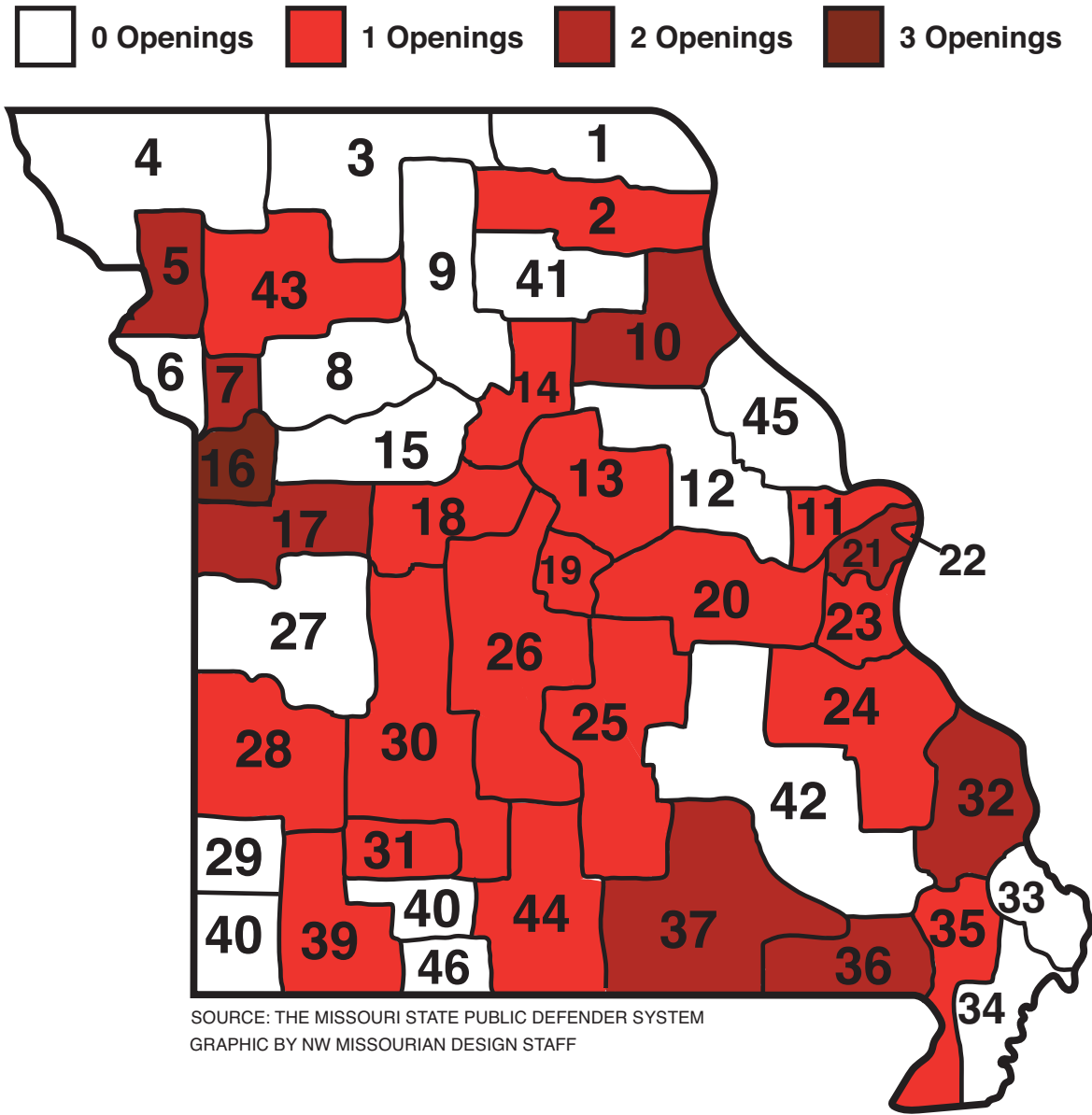
There are also parks, such as Beal Park, that make it difficult for wheelchair users to be able to use the playground equipment because there are wooden barriers surrounding the area.

The tax, if approved by voters, would also partially pay for repairs at the Maryville Community Center.

SEE COUNCIL | A8

A LEGAL DESERT

PUBLIC DEFENDER VACANCIES BY JUDICIAL DISTRICT



SOURCE: THE MISSOURI STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER SYSTEM  
GRAPHIC BY NW MISSOURIAN DESIGN STAFF

Rural areas see need for public defenders

SIDNEY LOWRY  
News Editor | @sidney\_lowry

For decades, the Missouri State Public Defender System has been underfunded and understaffed, with state attorneys overloaded with cases.

Ryan Williams, the district defender for the 4th Judicial Circuit, started his career in public defense in 2017 and has been at offices where he had to handle more than 70 cases at a time.

"The bottom line is whether or not we can provide ethical representation to our clients," he said. "It's easy to do when you have, you know, five, 10, 25, maybe 30 cases. But once you start getting 50 plus, it becomes harder to put the amount of time that you need into each case because you're constantly fielding calls from clients and their families and talking to witnesses."

In order to spread out the caseload, having adequate staffing plays a large part in accurate representation.

"I came from the Chillicothe office, and I know that the office has had openings since, I believe, March of last year that they're still trying to get filled," Williams said.

Kelly Miller, the district defender for the 43rd Judicial Circuit, is based in Chillicothe. There are supposed to be nine attorneys to defend the 10 counties covered by the 43rd Circuit. Of those nine spots, two of them remain open.

Miller said the nine attorneys take on around 75 cases at a time, and there are negative impacts on the cases when public defenders have to take on more.

"It requires you to go ahead and prioritize, you know, what is vital and what would be helpful, but you can't get to," Miller said.

er said. "So that's, that's kind of the, you know, the quandary that we are at, at this point, until we get fully staffed."

In February 2020, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a class-action lawsuit against Missouri putting people charged with crimes on waitlists as they waited for public defenders to represent them. After being dubbed unconstitutional, Missouri had to come up with a way to fix the long line of people needing to be represented.

"If the state of Missouri cannot afford to hire enough public defenders to properly represent all indigent defendants, it should either reallocate its resources accordingly or significantly decrease the number of people it chooses to prosecute in criminal court," said Jason Williamson, deputy director of the ACLU's Criminal Law Reform Project, in a press release from the ACLU.

Mary Fox, Missouri public defender director, helped to end the waitlist by spearheading the Missouri Justice Fellowship Program, a \$3.6 million initiative to bring 53 new public defenders to the judicial districts throughout Missouri.

The program is meant to hire young attorneys to start off their careers in the public defender system during a two-year commitment period. During that time, they will work cases and receive additional training and seminars to further their careers.

Though the fellowship was meant to bring more people into the defender system, Fox said there are currently 40 to 50 vacancies. She partially credits this to the "Great Resignation."

SEE DEFENDER | A8

Northwest hosts Court of Appeals, hears four arguments

JAKE PRATER  
News Reporter | @JakobLPrater

The Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District, heard arguments for four cases at 1 p.m. March 28 in the J.W. Jones Student Union Ballroom. Court appeals usually occur in Kansas City, Kansas, but for the past 20 years, they have been held in various areas of the Western District to give individuals an opportunity to observe the judicial system in progress. The Missouri Court of Appeals last met at Northwest March 11, 2019.

Representatives in each case were given time to give arguments to a three-judge panel. The panel consisted of presiding Judge Douglas Thomson, Judge Gary Witt, and Zel Fischer, a judge on the Missouri Supreme Court.

Thomson graduated from Northwest Missouri State University and practiced law in Maryville as an associate circuit judge. He joined the Western District in 2020.

Fischer grew up in Watson, Missouri, and was a trial judge in Rock Port, Missouri, before joining the Missouri Supreme Court in 2008.

Witt was an associate circuit judge in Platte County and was appointed to the Western District in 2010.

The panel of judges heard arguments from the cases of State of Missouri v. Curtail J. Hudson; George Schumacher v. Linda Stadler; Hannah Stickler and Molly Stickler v. Austin McGinnis and Kenneth Wells; and Walter Adams v. Treasurer of the State of Missouri-Custodian of the Second Injury Fund.

In Missouri v. Hudson, Jeffery Esparza, Hudson's attorney, appeared on his behalf. On Aug. 1, 2018, Hudson allegedly smoked laced marijuana, and after calling his aunt in fear he was going to jail, he grabbed a shotgun and went up to confront his neighbor Surge Israel Charles.

"He traveled over to his friend's house and asks his friend things like, 'Why are you conspiring against me? Why are you lying to me? Why are you out to get me?'" Esparza said.

Hudson shot and wounded Charles. Vincent Main, a bystander driving by, was shot at and injured when a shotgun shell pellet hit his rib cage. Hudson then shot bystander Xingong Hao multiple times and, according to eyewitnesses, beat him in the head with the butt of the shotgun after he was shot. Hao was killed as a result of the attack. He was a Chinese missionary visiting Kansas City, Missouri, and was a father of four.

Hudson admitted to smoking marijuana and shooting Charles and Hao. Prior to this appeal, Jackson County Circuit Court found Hudson guilty of second-degree murder, first-degree assault, unlawful use of a weapon and three counts of armed criminal action. He was sentenced to 26 years in prison. Hudson appealed his case for involuntary intoxication. Hudson also appealed because the original trial did not have the testimony of Dr. Lisa Witcher, an expert on the effects of PCP, which Hudson claimed his joint had been laced with. Thomson asked if it could've been marijuana with higher levels of THC than Hudson had ever had before. The defense pointed out that possibility was ruled out by Witcher's testimony.

SEE COURT | A8

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